

1903-Comments on dietary consultant's time at Faribault - A.C. Rogers

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Dr. Tomlinson: There is another reason, and the principal one, but to which dairymen do not refer, and that is the pathological one. It is a matter of development. Take either an animal or a plant, and if you develop it for a series of generations with the object of emphasizing some one of its characteristics; in proportion as you develop that characteristic more than its natural amount, you reduce the vitality of the individual animal, and that is why the Shorthorn is so susceptible, because longer than any other breed it has been bred for a beef animal for the taking on of flesh. In England for five hundred years, and may be longer, it has been the favorite breed, and in this country it has been developed for that purpose also. For a much longer time the Jersey has been developed for milk only and the vitality of the animal has been expended in that direction. Therefore it is much more susceptible to pathological changes than would be another animal. You can take an ordinary dung hill cow, you can feed her tuberculosis sputum for months, and the cow will not be affected, because of its natural powers of resistance. It has been my experience, and the experience of the states where Holstein herds are now numerous, that their power of resistance to tuberculosis is very great indeed.

Mr. Leavett: I think perhaps you will have to drop the milk cow question now. If Dr. Rogers feels able to do so I would be very glad to have him give us some information. We have heard from Mrs. James as to what she found at his institution, and some others. I do not know where the dividing line is found and what steps were taken, and what she did there, and I would like to have Dr. Rogers' opinion from the standpoint of superintendent, as to what the results have been at his institution, by reason of her work there, and whether he thinks the work in commendable and advisable, and should be continued at the other state institutions.

Dr. Rogers: Of course I wouldn't feel competent in any way to suggest with regard to the other institutions, but so far as Mrs. James' work at Faribault is concerned, we have been very much pleased with it. I perhaps ought to say as a preliminary matter that, on account of the number of kitchens (we have eight) our difficulty in securing good cooks and uniformity in methods pertaining to the cooking, preparation and serving of food, is increased proportion to the number of kitchens as compared with the small number at other institutions.

About four years ago I started out to see if we couldn't do something to unify our methods. I found that in each department the ladies in charge would have each her own ideas as to what ought to be done, and that those ideas conflicted in the different departments, and I couldn't feel that they could all be right if they were all different. I felt very much handicapped from the lack of technical knowledge concerning those things. So I set about devising some means to unify our methods. In looking up and

trying to locate someone who I thought competent to act as chief cook, I happened to learn of Mrs. James, and I wrote to her asking if she would take a position as cook. I received a very polite reply from Mrs. James. She declined to accept the position, but suggested that she did lecture on those subjects. I then, as the next alternative, went to the Agricultural College, and secured one of the graduates of that institution to take up this particular work. I felt that we ought to have a better knowledge of the rules governing the preparation of food, and a better knowledge of what good food should consist of, and a better knowledge of the best methods of serving food, and that from our educational institutions, we ought to receive at least some assistance along these lines. I secured one young lady who has been in the employ of the state ever since as attendant. There is some difficulty in carrying out a work of this kind by a young woman who has had no special experience in dealing with people, and who has worked in the kitchen for no great length of time. Our young lady has been handicapped for those two reasons in her work. She found it very difficult. Her theories were correct, and she has assisted us very much in preparing our bills of fare, and has taught the young men their work in the large kitchens, where the cooks have been cooking all their lives, they paid no attention whatever, and it was rather difficult for her to go on with her work. So that I hailed with much delight the prospect of having Mrs. James, who had so much experience along these lines, in our kitchens. She was welcomed, I think, by all of us, and I was very much pleased to find that my people gave her hearty support, with perhaps one or two little exceptions, and one of those exceptions disappeared very quickly and another person took her place. Since that everything has been perfectly harmonious. The cooks are taking up her suggestions, and are trying to carry them out. Mrs. James ran across some prejudices, as we expected her to, yet I think in the main she has justified expectations, and has convinced the people that she is right. Mrs. James, of course, is a little handicapped in not understanding some of the conditions that obtain in large institutions, and it is these conditions which very often, even on the part of well meaning people, cause them to contrive shorter methods, simply because it is more convenient. There is an immense amount of work to be done in a short time, and very often the assistance is of a very poor quality, - inmate help, or very green employees, who have had no training whatever. Even competent help sometimes will get things there where they ought not to be. At least I can say this, that our people have put forth their best efforts, I think, to assist in carrying out new methods. In the matter of bread making, it was a fact that our bread had been very unsatisfactory for a long time, and I have been at my wits' ends to get information as to how it could be made better. Mrs. James has helped us to solve that problem, and in two ways; first in the preparation, and, second, in helping us to find out that our flour wasn't what it ought to have been. Of course we are all of us somewhat handicapped, unless we have technical training, in determining the qualities of goods we ought to receive. Some of the gentlemen are perhaps better qualified in that than others. In changing help in the store rooms and the steward's department, we have been considerable handicapped in not having people who were competent to tell what qualities ought to be received, and what ought to be rejected. Along the line of flour, as has already been said, we received a great deal of help. I think the great difficulty in carrying out proper ideas along these lines is not so much the lack of disposition on the part of people who are doing the work, as lack of opportunity for training. That is the one thing that I think all of us feel. Now to do the work right in our kitchens, and in our dining

rooms, we should have not only excellent cooks, but, housekeepers, are thoroughly familiar with the technology of cooking, or the principles involved, and it is impossible to at the present time, to secure such people, at least at the wages we are compelled to pay. Those we do get are simply ladies who have been accustomed to doing certain things in the ordinary family life, and they attempt to carry those out in the institution. Some of the methods that are perfectly practicable, and improper, in a small family, are positively impracticable, and improper in a large institution. I do not know whether it is possible at all or not, but it seems to me that the one thing we need more than anything else, is a good training school for housekeepers, and for assistants of that class generally. If this movement could go on to the extent of establishing something of that kind that would give us available help, it would certainly be a valuable thing, in addition to meeting of the immediate wants of our institution. I do not know as I can add anything more to what I have said. I heartily commend Mrs. James, and wish to see her back at the institution, helping us further.

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